

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0671
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MADRID
ALL NATO CAPITALS

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 03719

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, SP
SUBJECT: SYG LUNS' COMMENTS TO PRESS ON SPAIN AND NATO

REFS: (A) MADRID 3285 (DTG 291212Z MAR 78), (B) STATE 83354
(DTG 312004Z MAR 78)

1. EMBASSY MADRID NOTES IN REF A THAT PSOE LEADERS MUGICA AND SOLANA LEFT THE IMPRESSION AFTER THEIR RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON THAT NATO WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ISSUE AN INVITATION TO SPAIN TO JOIN THE ALLIANCE UNLESS A SUBSTANTIAL PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IN SPAIN WOULD BE FORESEEN VOTING IN FAVOR. THE EMBASSY SUGGESTED THAT WASHINGTON SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT (AS WASHINGTON HAS NOW DONE (REF B)) BY REFERENCE TO THE US POSITION AND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITION OF THE ALLIES, "PERHAPS BY REFERENCE TO REMARKS BY LUNS".

2. IN THIS REGARD, WE NOTE SYG LUNS' INTERVIEW WITH L. MENDEZ DOMINIQUEZ PUBLISHED IN "INFORMACIONES" OF MADRID ON JANUARY 26. LUNS SAID THAT IF SPAIN WOULD WANT TO JOIN NATO, IT WOULD BE WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS. LUNS
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ADDED THAT THERE IS NO RETICENCE IN THIS RESPECT FROM THE MEMBER COUNTRIES. IT WOULD BE UP TO SPAIN TO DECIDE WHETHER AND WHEN TO JOIN NATO. LUNS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE FINANCIAL COST TO SPAIN RESULTING FROM JOINING IS FREQUENTLY EXAGGERATED. THE NETHERLANDS, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS ABLE TO REDUCE ITS DEFENSE EXPENDITURES AFTER JOINING NATO.

3. IN THE SAME ARTICLE, MENDEZ DOMINIQUEZ REPORTED THAT HE FEELS AFTER VISITING NATO THAT SPAIN IS WANTED IN THE ALLIANCE BUT THAT IT IS OBVIOUS THE INVITATION WILL NOT BE ISSUED UNTIL SPAIN CLEARLY INDICATES THAT IT WISHES TO JOIN.

4. COMMENT: WHILE NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING THE PARLIAMENT'S MAJORITY ISSUE, LUNS' COMMENTS DO REFLECT THE GENERAL CONSENSUS AT NATO HEADQUARTERS THAT SPAIN WOULD BE ADMITTED TO MEMBERSHIP IF IT APPLIES. BENNETT

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